

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to dentists; creating s. 381.4019,
 3 F.S.; establishing the Dental Student Loan Repayment
 4 Program in order to encourage dentists to work in
 5 underserved areas or public health programs; providing
 6 definitions; requiring the Department of Health,
 7 certain universities, and the Florida Dental
 8 Association to develop the program; providing for the
 9 award of funds; providing the maximum number of years
 10 funds may be awarded to a dentist; providing sanctions
 11 for failure to comply with loan requirements;
 12 requiring the department to adopt rules; providing an
 13 effective date.

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 15 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 17 Section 1. Section 381.4019, Florida Statutes, is created
 18 to read:

19 381.4019 Dental Student Loan Repayment Program.—Subject to
 20 the availability of funds, the Legislature establishes the
 21 Dental Student Loan Repayment Program in order to encourage
 22 qualified dentists to practice in medically underserved areas or
 23 public health programs in the state in which there are shortages
 24 of such practitioners.

25 (1) As used in this section, the term:

26 (a) "Department" means the Department of Health.

27 (b) "Loan program" means the Dental Student Loan Repayment
28 Program.

29 (c) "Medically underserved area" means a geographic area,
30 an area having a special population, or a facility as designated
31 by department rule which is a health professional shortage area
32 as defined by federal regulations and which has a shortage of
33 dental health professionals who serve Medicaid and other low-
34 income patients.

35 (d) "Public health program" means a county health
36 department, the Children's Medical Services program, a federally
37 funded community health center, a federally funded migrant
38 health center, or other publicly funded or nonprofit health care
39 program designated by the department.

40 (2) The loan program shall be developed by the department
41 in cooperation with the University of Florida College of
42 Dentistry, the Nova Southeastern University College of Dental
43 Medicine, the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine School
44 of Dental Medicine, and the Florida Dental Association.

45 (3) The department shall award funds from the loan program
46 to repay the student loans of state-licensed dentists who commit
47 to practice in a medically underserved area or in a public
48 health program to serve Medicaid recipients and other low-income
49 patients in this state.

50 (4) A participant in the loan program may receive funds
51 for at least 1 year, up to a maximum of 4 years. The period of
52 obligated service begins when the dentist is employed in the

53 medically underserved area or by a public health program.

54 (5) Failure to comply with the participation requirements
55 of the loan program shall result in ineligibility for license
56 renewal under chapter 466. If a dentist is unable to participate
57 for reasons of disability, the penalty is the actual amount of
58 financial assistance provided to the dentist. Financial
59 penalties shall be deposited into the loan program and used to
60 provide additional funding for program participants.

61 (6) The department shall adopt rules to administer the
62 loan program. The rules must quantify the amount of funds each
63 dentist may receive per year of participation in the loan
64 program.

65 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2014.